



bladderwort

Utricularia vulgaris

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta - flowering plants

Features

The bladderwort is a free-floating plant with finely divided, alternate leaves. It has small bladder-like structures on its leaves. The stems float horizontally beneath the water's surface and may extend for four feet or more. This plant does not have roots. The yellow flowers are on stalks that extend above the water and are up to eight inches long.

Natural History

The bladderwort is found in quiet waters. It flowers from June through August. The bladders on the leaves are used to capture small aquatic organisms. The bladder expands when a prey item touches its trigger hairs, drawing the prey in where it is digested by enzymes and absorbed. It is frequent in the northwest and north central part of the state and infrequent to rare elsewhere.

Habitats

natural lakes and prairie marshes; constructed lakes, ponds, & reservoirs

Iowa Status

common; native

Range

scattered throughout Iowa in suitable habitats

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.